

NOTES ON *SWAMMERDAMIA COMPUNCTELLA*  
HERRICH-SCHÄFFER (LEPIDOPTERA:  
YPONOMEUTIDAE)

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This species was added to the British list by Metcalfe (1933) who concluded "The species seems to be widely distributed and is probably overlooked. I possess seven specimens from Surrey, E. Sussex, Broadstone (Dorset) and Rannoch."

During the last decade or two the species has been noticed in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, Yorkshire and in various parts of Scotland. The paucity of records from the south of England has often puzzled me. My own specimen from the New Forest, 19.vi.1971 (Goater, 1983) seems to be the only one from south of London since Metcalfe's day.

Recently I had the opportunity to examine Metcalfe's collection and I was surprised how variable his series seemed since my bred specimens from Scotland (Agassiz, 1984) were remarkably constant in size and appearance. On closer inspection I became doubtful about some of the determinations. One specimen labelled 'Surrey, 12.vii.38' looked like *Paraswammerdamia lutarea* (Haw.) which would fit the date better. Dissection of the female genitalia proved it to be so. Two female specimens labelled 'Surrey, 12.v.30' and 'Broadstone, 31.v.21' looked like *S. caesiella* (Hübner) and dissection of the first confirmed this opinion. A fourth specimen labelled 'Westcott, 25.v.39' resembled *P. albicapitella* (Scharf.) (= *spiniella* (Hübner)) and this was confirmed by external examination of the male genitalia. That left three specimens correctly determined as *compunctella*; bearing the data 'Rannoch, 26.vi.18; Tilgate, 17.vi.30; and East Sussex, 11.vi.21'.

It will be noted that of these seven specimens in the Metcalfe collection two had been added after 1933. He had given two specimens to Pierce for dissection and illustration in Pierce & Metcalfe (1935). These specimens are labelled 'Tilgate, 17.vi.30' and 'W. Surrey, 21.v (or vi).31'.

It must be something of a record for an entomologist to discover a species new to Britain and then to bequeath a series of that species which contained no less than four different species! This is more forgivable than it sounds, for in the British Collection in the British Museum (Natural History) the series of *S. compunctella* comprised five specimens of three different species, none of which was *compunctella*! There are however two other British specimens of *S. compunctella* in the BM(NH), one in the Ford collection labelled 'Westcott, 16.vi.36' taken and correctly determined by Metcalfe;

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another is in the Bankes collection, unidentified but separated from other *Swammerdamia* species, and labelled 'P. Mason, 1892'. P. B. Mason was a collector who lived near Burton-on-Trent so we may speculate that the specimen came from the Midlands.

The date of Metcalfe's West Surrey specimen is not clear. It looks like v. (May) but has the dot of the i of vi. (June). If we assume that the life history of the species is the same in southern England as in Northern Scotland a date for the adult before the end of May is hardly conceivable. The larva has to complete its growth on the new shoots of rowan which do not open until into May, there is then the pupal period to be gone through before emergence. A date after the end of June is equally unlikely in England, although in Scotland it hangs on well into July. In mid-June allied species are less likely to be encountered so it is worth being watchful for *compunctella* at that time.

The complete list of southern records is as follows: Two specimens from Tilgate and one from East Sussex, which could be the same locality; one specimen from Westcott (near Dorking), Surrey and another from West Surrey; and one from the New Forest, Hampshire.

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### References

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[**Postscript** Dr. M. W. Harper permits me to add that he bred a specimen of *compunctella* in early June 1987 from a larva found on hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.) in Herefordshire in April 1987.]